

Haggadah – The Grace After Meals

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When we are hungry, in essence it is the soul that craves. But, we aren't aware of it. We are too busy alleviating our physical discomfort or satisfying our palates.

Then the meal is over. And now, deep inside, we sense ourselves a bit embarrassed about how we engaged in purely physical pleasure. Empty pleasure. Our innards may be full, but our souls still crave.

We must appease the soul. Provide it with spiritual nourishment. This is the Grace after Meals. We give the soul a chance to express its yearnings, its cravings for God. We try to connect our hearts, our emotions, to the words we are reciting. We allow ourselves to become aroused. If those emotions were drowned out while we ate, now they can surface. With this verbal expression, we appease, we nourish the soul. And, in so doing, we have filled an empty pleasure with Meaning. We have transmuted our embarrassment into yearning. But, what do we do when our spiritual arteries are clogged with deposits of a physical existence? When we just cannot open our hearts to allow the flow of emotion? When the words we recite are as empty as the meal we just finished? We can at least want! We can want to recite the Grace with emotion! We can want to yearn for God! We can want to nourish our souls! And we can always want to want...

This is the Invitation to Grace:

Gentlemen! We now want to recite Grace! (Likutey Halakhot, Birkhat HaMazon 3:1,2,6).

Excerpt from the Breslov Haggadah by Yehoshua Starret

